Leonard, Col. Reuben Wells

January 1917

(08)

Board

701

SPRINGBANK
ST. CATHARINES, ONT.
Jan. 6th, 1917.

Dr. R.A. Falconer,
President, Toronto University,
T o r o n t o, Ont.

Dear Dr. Falconer:-

Though my various other businesses have made it impossible for me to attend the Governors' meetings of the University as frequently as I would like, I sometimes do think of the Institution, and though probably the question of closing the University during the war has been brought to the attention of the Board before, there is no harm in referring to it, as I find that there is considerable criticism among the laboring classes in regard to that matter.

They argue, and with a show of reason, that they are asked to sign National Service cards, and to enlist, while at the same time such national institutions as the University continue to run, giving an education to young men and to young women who should be quite as liable for service. Their criticism also extends to the construction of large public works which might, in the opinion of many, wait until peace is again restored.

The Dominion Government has at last awakened to the necessities of the case, and has closed down some of their important public works, notably the Welland Canal construction.

While the splendid showing of Toronto University is sending students to the war, and in training officers, must be recognized by all, still it is a matter of common knowledge that there are students

Leonard, Col. Reuben Wells

January 1917

there who should take their part, and I am personally acquainted with two who, it would appear, are at Toronto University quite as much for the purpose of keeping them away from the recruiting influences at home as for the education they are obtaining.

Of course it may be argued strongly that it is a pity that the University should close its doors to the lady students until the war is over, but could they not make munitions, and would not such an action be very impressive and be a very valuable education to the generation now growing up? While they would learn less of Arts and Sciences, they would learn more of the real things of life, and would be proud to tell of it, and pass it on to their children.

I have no fear but that the professors could all be vary valuably utilized in various departments in connection with Conservation and Scientific Research and other work which is so necessary at the present time in order to enable us to compete in the future with the highly trained scientists of Germany who have heretofore practically monopolized certain lines of industry by virtue of the organization of their attainments. I understand that this is being done to a large extent in the English Universities.

The question of finances is of course tremendous, and I think the whole question is well worthy of very serious attention on the part of the Governors, if it has not already received such.

With best wishes for the New Year,

Yours sincerely,

W. Leonard.

703

Extracted from XXXII 2M

January 8th, 1917

Colonel R. W. Leonard,

St. Catharines, Ont.

My dear Colonel Leonard:

I hope that you will find it possible to be present at the meeting of the Board of Governors which is to be held on Thursday, the 11th, as there is a great deal of important business to come up. It would be well then to consider the matter that you refer to with regard to the closing of the University.

My own decided judgment is that the University should be kept open. Even under conscription I believe it should be kept open as the German and English Universities have been. We must maintain our lines of connection between the present and the future, and I do not believe that either in money or men there will be any appreciable saving which would help us to end the war if we were to close the University.

There are always a number of men who are physically unfit. A month ago an examination was made of the first year in the Dental College, all having volunteered for active service, 35% were rejected as being physically unfit. Many of these men will serve the country in the future by being good teachers or engineers or medical men. My own fear is that whereas ten years after this we shall have plenty of people to be clerks in stores, but shall find our shortage in men for positions just such as the country will need when

 XXXII

it begins to develope again. Then of the women only a small proportion would be accepted for munition work. Many of them would be physically unable for it. Furthermore, the expenses of the Universit would not be very greatly lessened. The staff could not be discharged, and only a portion of them could be used for scientific purposes. Even now there are far more men willing to work at something than the Government finds occupation for. The buildings and grounds would have to be maintained and heated. In addition the keeping of the University open has been I believe the greatest single centre for recruiting that the country has had. Hundreds of men have enlisted here who at home would have been out of range of the influence. We have driven into the minds of the students the ideals of this war and have sent them out as missionaries. The week before they went away in December I spoke to nearly a thousand students on the enlistment and thrift campaign and impressed upon them that each one of them must be a missionary wherever he went.

To close the University would be to still one of the most helpful voices of the country. For these reasons I think that we should keep the University open, but probably it would be wise policy on the part of the Governors to issue some statement embodying these reasons so that the public may understand.

With kind regards, I am,

Yours sincerely,

President.

656

July 8th, 1917

Colonel P. A. Leonard,

St. Catharines, Ont.

Dear Colonel Leonard:

At the close of the first year in which the Fellowships were awarded to which you so generously contributed I should like to report to you in a general way the results of the work done. Three Fellowships were awarded, one to Mr. Pietert, a Mennonite from Manitoba and a graduate of the University of that Province, one to Miss Currie, a graduate of McGill University, and one to Mr. Searle, a graduate of this University in Physics. The work of all these has been highly reported upon by the heads of the staff, and two received the degree of Master of Arts, and they have been strongly recommended to be given Fellowships for another year, the prospect being that they will go forward for the degree of Ph.D. These two are Miss Currie and Mr. Pietert.

We have also had eight additional applications this spring for Fellowships from Britisn Columbia, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. To two of these applicants Fellowships on the Alexander Mackenzie Foundation in Political Science will be awarded. One of the open Fellowships to which you have contributed has been already awarded for next year, and we are likely to award the fourth during this month.

You will see therefore that the purpose aimed at in these Fellowships of drawing the best students from the other Provinces of the Dominion to this University for graduate work was based upon a real need and that we are likely to realise our purpose even more rapidly than we had anticipated.

As our new financial year has begun on the first of July the Bursar will be glad to have the amount for the second year of the Fellowship.

With kind regards, I am,

Yours sincerely,

President.